

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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S E C R E T QUITO 8299

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USUN FOR AMBASSADOR MOORE

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR EFIS EC

SUBJECT: FISHERIES INITIATIVE: GETTING PAST THE NEXT TUNA FISHING
SEASON

REF: A. QUITO 7718

B. QUITO 8187

C. QUITO 8263

1. I MET AT HIS REQUEST WITH ADMIRAL POVEDA AT 11:00 A.M.
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 13, THE GENERAL STRIKE NOTWITHSTANDING.
THE MEETING WAS A FOLLOW UP TO THAT REPORTED IN REF A AND
WAS FOR THE PURPOSE OF LEARNING WHAT THE ECUADOREAN NAVY
(AND BY EXTENSION THE GOE) WAS PREPARED TO DO TO HELP GET
PAST THE COMING TUNA FISHING SEASON.

2. WITH RESPECT TO WHAT MIGHT BE TERMED "OFFICIAL MEASURES",
ADMIRAL POVEDA TOLD ME:

A. THE 600 NET REGISTERED TON LIMIT ON VESSELS WAS OUT.
I ASKED HIM WHEN THIS WOULD BE DONE, AND THE ADMIRAL SAID
THAT HE HAD GIVEN INSTRUCTIONS THAT IT BE DONE TEN DAYS
AGO AND HE THOUGHT THAT IT HAD. HE SAID HE WOULD LOOK

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INTO IT IMMEDIATELY. I COMMENTED THAT THE POLITICAL

COUNSELOR AND OTHER POLITICAL OFFICER WHO GENERALLY DEALT WITH THE SUB-MINISTRY OF FISHERIES RESOURCES HAD BEEN OUT OF TOWN, AND THAT PERHAPS THEREFORE WE HAD NOT HAD OUR USUAL CONTACT. I REMINDED POVEDA THAT WE WERE PREPARED TO ACQUAINT THE U.S. INDUSTRY WITH NEW GOE RULES AND HENCE NEEDED TO KNOW HOW THIS LIMITATION HAD BEEN LIFTED.

B. IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE TO DO ANYTHING ABOUT MATRICULAS. THEY WERE IN THE LAW AND THAT COULD NOT BE CHANGED AT THIS JUNCTURE. I ASKED ADMIRAL POVEDA IF THEY WERE THEN GOING TO REDUCE THE PRICE OF MATRICULAS, AND HE SAID THAT THIS WAS NOT POSSIBLE EITHER.

C. WITH RESPECT TO LICENSES, POVEDA SAID THAT THE GOE WOULD MAKE THEIR PURCHASE BY RADIO POSSIBLE AND WOULD DESIGNATE CERTAIN RADIO FREQUENCIES WHICH WOULD BE GUARDED AT ALL TIMES SO THAT THE LICENSES COULD BE PURCHASED. IN RESPONSE TO MY QUERY, THE ADMIRAL AFFIRMED THAT IN ORDER TO PURCHASE A LICENSE BY RADIO THE FISHING VESSEL WOULD, HOWEVER, HAVE TO HAVE PURCHASED A MATRICULA FIRST.

3. THE ADMIRAL THEN TURNED TO THE MEASURES THAT THE NAVY WAS PREPARED TO TAKE. HE SAID HE HAD DISCUSSED THE SITUATION WITH HIS "CAPTAINS" AND THAT THEY WERE AGREED BOTH ON THE NECESSITY OF CERTAIN MEASURES AND ON THE DESIRABILITY OF FURTHERING RELATIONS WITH THE U.S. NAVY. SPECIFICALLY, ADMIRAL POVEDA SAID:

A. HE INTENDED TO PUT ALL OF THE SHIPS HE COULD INTO THE YARDS FOR MAINTENANCE AND REPAIRS. THIS WAS A NORMAL MOVE AT CERTAIN PERIODS, HE SAID, AND HE PROPOSED TO DO IT NOW SO THAT THERE WOULD BE LESS VESSELS PATROLLING ECUADOREAN-CLAIMED WATERS.

B. SHOULD A CAPTURE OCCUR, THE GOE WOULD DO ITS BEST TO LIMIT PUBLICITY OF IT, TO TREAT THE VESSEL COURTEOUSLY, AND TO DISPATCH IT AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE. APROPOS OF CAPTURES, HE SAID THAT OFTEN LOCAL FISHING INTERESTS SPECIFICALLY NOTIFIED THE NAVY OF THE PRESENCE OF AN UNLICENSED FOREIGN VESSEL AND IDENTIFIED IT BY
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NAME: THIS MADE IT DIFFICULT, OF COURSE, FOR THE NAVY TO AVOID ACTION.

4. I REMINDED THE ADMIRAL OF MY PREVIOUS SUGGESTION THAT AN ECUADOREAN NAVAL VESSEL ENCOUNTERING A FISHING VESSEL IN ECUADOREAN CLAIMED WATERS GIVE IT A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF TIME TO PURCHASE A LICENSE OR BE CAPTURED. THE ADMIRAL SAID THAT HE HAD TALKED ABOUT THIS WITH HIS CAPTAINS

BUT THEY DID NOT THINK THAT THIS WAS AT ALL FEASIBLE: THEIR JUNIOR OFFICERS AND CREW WOULD SEE THIS KIND OF MEASURE AS FAILURE BY THE ECUADOREAN NAVY TO ENFORCE THE LAW. WHAT THE ADMIRAL SAID WOULD HAPPEN, HOWEVER, WAS THAT THERE WOULD BE A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF DELAY ON THE PART OF THE ECUADOREAN NAVAL VESSEL IN APPROACHING AND ACTUALLY BOARDING A FISHING VESSEL: THIS WAS SOMETHING THE CAPTAINS COULD CONTROL WITHOUT BEING SUBJECT TO ACCUSATIONS BY THEIR OFFICERS OR CREWS. THE FISHING VESSEL IN QUESTION, THE ADMIRAL CONTINUED, SEEING THE ECUADOREAN NAVY VESSEL APPROACH, COULD HAVE TIME TO BUY THE LICENSE BY RADIO AND HENCE HAVE SOMETHING TO SHOW THE ECUADOREAN NAVAL VESSEL WHEN IT WAS CHALLENGED.

5. SINCE POVEDA HAD NOT SEEN THE ACTING SECRETARY'S OCTOBER 27 LETTER ON USG LICENSE POLICY, I GAVE HIM A COPY. HE WAS PLEASED WITH IT, TERMING IT A "DEFINITE STEP (AHEAD)".

6. AT THE CONCLUSION OF OUR DISCUSSION I TOLD THE ADMIRAL THAT I FREQUENTLY SAW SUBSECRETARY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AYALA AS WELL AS THE FOREIGN MINISTER: DID HE WISH ME NOT TO MENTION OUR CONVERSATION? THE ADMIRAL REPLIED THAT HE MUCH PREFERRED THAT I KEEP OUR CONVERSATION COMPLETELY CONFIDENTIAL. HE SAID THAT WHAT HE WAS TRYING TO DO WAS EASE THE PROBLEM BETWEEN THE US AND ECUADOR SO THAT RELATIONS BETWEEN THE ECUADOREAN AND AMERICAN NAVIES COULD CONTINUE TO GROW CLOSER: -- WITHOUT, OF COURSE, VIOLATING ECUADOREAN LAW ON THE 200 MILES. NEVERTHELESS, THE KNOWLEDGE ON THE PART OF (UNSPECIFIED) PERSONS OF THE MEASURES THE ECUADOREAN NAVY PLANNED TO TAKE COULD BE USED BOTH AGAINST HIM AND THE GOVERNMENT. HE THEREFORE ASKED THAT THIS CONVERSATION AND THE PLANS
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OF THE ECUADOREAN NAVY BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL, AND I ASSURED HIM THEY WOULD BE.

7. COMMENT: SUBJECT TO OUR VERIFICATION OF THE DETAILS ON THE LIFTING OF THE 600 NRT LIMIT AND LEARNING SPECIFICALLY HOW THE RADIO LICENSING WORKS, I THINK ADMIRAL POVEDA AND THE GOE HAVE GONE AS FAR AS WE CAN REALISTICALLY EXPECT. THE NEXT STEPS ARE UP TO US. MY RECOMMENDATIONS WILL BE FORTHCOMING--BY TELEGRAM IF I HAVE THE TIME, OR IN PERSON DURING THE FORTHCOMING COM CONFERENCE.
BREWSTER

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